

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 246

EA 011 159

AUTHOR Robinson, Norman  
TITLE Attitudes Toward the Public Schools: A Canadian American Comparison.  
PUB DATE Jun 77  
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration (Fredericton, New Brunswick, June 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Community Attitudes; \*Community Surveys; Comparative Analysis; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; \*National Surveys; \*Public Opinion; Public Schools; Surveys; Tables (Data)

IDENTIFIERS British Columbia (Vancouver); Gallup Poll; United States

## ABSTRACT

This study compared the findings of the 1969-76 Gallup polls on education with findings from three Canadian surveys on attitudes toward public schools. The Canadian studies were done in 1973, 1975, and 1976 in two large suburban school districts in Vancouver, British Columbia. In each of the Canadian surveys 200-250 adults were interviewed. Both the Gallup poll and the British Columbian surveys revealed discipline as the major problem facing schools. The majority of Canadian and American respondents queried favored improved programs and services rather than expulsion for students not interested in school. Subjects from both countries agreed that students do not work hard enough in school. Most respondents favored a system of national, state, or provincial testing. While the Gallup poll and the 1973 Canadian study showed the public almost equally divided on whether the schools' readiness to try innovations was too great, not great enough, or about right, the later Canadian studies showed a growing reaction against educational innovation. And although a majority of Americans were opposed to school tax increases, a majority in each of the Canadian samples would approve a needed increase. Most Canadian and American respondents felt that schools were doing an average or better than average job. (Author/JM)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

ED165246

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

*ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:  
A CANADIAN AMERICAN COMPARISON*

by

*Norman Robinson  
Faculty of Education  
Simon Fraser University*

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

---

*N. Robinson*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND  
USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

*A Paper Presented at the Annual  
Conference of the Canadian Association  
for the Study of Educational Administration.*

*Fredericton, New Brunswick*

*June, 1977*

EA 011 159

## Background

Since 1969 George H. Gallup and his associates have conducted an annual survey of attitudes toward the public schools in a national sample of the adult population of the United States. The eight annual surveys<sup>1</sup> that have been conducted have proven to be useful to educational policymakers in a number of ways. Firstly, they have alerted lay and professional groups in education to overall public knowledge and attitudes toward a variety of school programs and practices. Secondly, they have ascertained public readiness to accept new programs. Thirdly, they have assessed public willingness to bear increased educational costs. Finally, they have served as a national benchmark against which local school districts could compare their own attitudes.

In British Columbia, three in-depth studies of attitudes toward the public schools have been conducted in the last few years (1973, 1975, and 1976). Each study was done in a local school district. A quasi-random sample of the adult population of each district was drawn using a sampling procedure described by Kish and others<sup>2</sup>. The schedule of interview items used was compiled from items used in previous annual Gallup surveys. In each of the B.C. studies, a team of interviewers was given intensive training in interview techniques. The individual interviews lasted one hour or more. The three B.C. studies that have been done are:

1. Macdonald study.<sup>3</sup> This study was done in Coquitlam School District in 1973. Coquitlam is a suburban school district within the metropolitan region of Vancouver and has a population of over 90,000. In terms of socio-economic status, the school district is mixed. It has the full range of low, average and high socio-economic groups.

A total of 246 interviews was conducted in this study.

2. Backer study.<sup>4</sup> This study was conducted in Delta School District in 1975. Like Coquitlam, Delta is a suburban school district within the metropolitan Vancouver region and it too has the full range of low, average and high socio-economic groups. The district has a population of over 66,000 people. A total of 205 adult citizens was interviewed in this study.

3. Eraut study.<sup>5</sup> In 1976, Eraut conducted a second study in the Coquitlam School District. The study was designed to be a follow-up to the 1973 Macdonald study. The number of adults interviewed was 269.

### Purposes

The principal purpose of the Macdonald, Backer and Eraut studies was to survey attitudes toward the public schools in each of the districts involved and to compare these attitudes to the Gallup findings in the United States. In this way, Canadian and American viewpoints on a variety of educational issues could be compared and contrasted.

The Eraut study had a second purpose. This additional purpose was to compare public attitudes toward education in Coquitlam School District in 1976 with public attitudes toward education in the district in 1973 as measured by the Macdonald study. In short, an attempt was made to determine the degree of stability or change in public attitudes within this three year period in the district.

### Interview Items

As indicated earlier, the interview items used in the Macdonald, Backer and Eraut studies were all taken from the block of items used by Gallup in his studies from 1969 to 1975.

Citizens were interviewed on a wide range of educational issues. The interview items used in each of the three studies varied from district to district. The reason for this was that school trustees and educators in individual districts wanted to elicit different kinds of information from the publics they were serving.

This paper will not report findings on all the educational issues studied in each of the three B.C. studies. Instead, the paper will limit itself to a comparison and contrast of Canadian and American viewpoints on the following major educational issues.

1. Major problems facing the public schools.
2. Dealing with the non-interested student.
3. Declining student achievement.
4. System-wide testing of students.
5. The pace of educational innovation.
6. Willingness to pay increased taxes for schools.
7. Overall rating of the public schools.

### General Findings

A comparison of the Macdonald, Backer, and Eraut studies with the Gallup studies reveals that Canadians and Americans share similar viewpoints on many educational issues.\* Of more

\* On most educational issues it was possible to make a direct comparison between Canadian and American attitudes in the years 1973, 1975, and 1976. In some cases, however, direct comparisons were not possible. For example, Gallup and his associates may have asked his interviewees a particular question in 1971 and not in subsequent years. If the question was an interesting one, it was often included in the 1973, 1975 or 1976 Canadian studies. Thus, only a rough comparison between Canadian and American attitudes can be made, i.e., a comparison between American attitudes in 1971 to Canadian attitudes in 1973, 1975 or 1976.

interest, perhaps, is the fact the comparison revealed certain marked differences in attitudes between Canadians and Americans on a number of educational issues.

In addition, the Canadian studies done in 1975 and 1976 showed (as did the Gallup surveys in these same years) a growing conservatism in public attitudes toward education.

In a similar fashion, the 1976 Eraut study showed a growing conservative spirit in Coquitlam since the time of the 1973 Macdonald study.

### Specific Findings

1. Major problems facing the public schools. In each of the eight annual Gallup polls (except one\*) discipline has emerged as the major problem facing the public schools. In each of the B.C. studies, discipline also emerged as the major problem (Table 1). As inspection of Table 1 reveals that American concern over discipline has remained relatively constant (around 23%). In contrast, Canadian concern seems to be mounting. In 1973 the Canadian interviewees were less concerned over discipline than were their American counterparts. By 1975 and 1976, however, the concerns of Canadians over the question of discipline had become more intense than those of Americans. In 1975 in the United States, 23% of the interviewees considered discipline to be the major problem facing the public schools. In Canada in this same year, 37% of the interviewees felt it to be the major problem.

\* In 1971 in the U.S., discipline ranked third among the major problems with which schools must deal. The top three major problems identified by interviewees were: lack of finances (23%); integration/segregation (21%); and discipline (14%).

In 1976, the American percentage was steady at 22%, but the Canadian percentage jumped to 43%.

In the years 1973, 1975 and 1976 Canadian interviewees also showed more concern than American interviewees over problems relating to parental lack of interest and class size. American interviewees, on the other hand, showed more concern over integration/segregation problems, lack of financial support, and the difficulty of getting "good" teachers. Both Canadian and American interviewees shared a more or less equal concern over problems relating to drugs, poor curriculum, pupils' lack of interest, lack of proper facilities and size of schools/ classes.

2. Dealing with the non-interested student. Interviewees were asked in the 1971 Gallup poll, the 1975 Backer study and the 1976 Eraut study what should be done with students who are not interested in school (Table 2). In all three cases, the majority of Canadian and American respondents favored improved programs and services for the non-interested student. These improvements took the form of special classes, better curricula, better teaching methods, and special counselling. A sizeable minority in the U.S. and Canada favored, however, more punitive measures, such as straight expulsion of the non-interested student from school. Quite striking is the change in attitude among citizens in Coquitlam School District from 1973 to 1976 toward the desirability of expulsion policies. In 1973 in Coquitlam only 12% of the interviewees favored expulsion from school as a means of dealing with the non-interested student; but in 1976 the percentage in favor of expulsion jumped to 22%.

Of further interest is the fact that an overwhelmingly majority of American respondents (in 1970) and Canadian respondents (in 1975 and 1976) favoured the exercise of corporal punishment in schools (Table 3).

3. Declining student achievement. The 1975 Gallup survey and the 1976 Erout study revealed that both Americans and Canadians agree that students do not work hard enough in schools, either at the elementary or at the high school level (Table 4). The Canadian and American samples further agreed on the main probable causes of a perceived decline in student achievement (Table 5). They pointed to lack of discipline in the home and school, students' lack of motivation, and poor curricula. One probably cause that was emphasized more by Americans than Canadians was inadequate and uninterested teachers. On the other hand, Canadians identified poor instructional methods more often than did Americans.

The public on both sides of the border favoured a system of national or provincial testing in order that the educational achievement of students in any local district could be compared to a national or provincial norm (Table 6).

4. The pace of educational innovation.

In 1970, 1971 and 1974 Gallup asked the American public whether they felt the public schools were not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or whether they were too ready to try new ideas. The results for all three years are quite similar. About 20% of the public felt the schools were too ready to try new ideas; about 24% said that schools were not interested enough in trying new ideas; and 32% felt that the pace of trying new educational ideas was about right.

*In British Columbia, the 1973 Coquitlam results are quite similar to the American results of 1970, 1971 and 1974. The later studies done in Delta in 1975 and in Coquitlam in 1976 show, on the other hand, that the public feels the schools are too ready to try new ideas. Only a small minority (about 11%) feel that the schools are not interested enough in trying new ideas (Table 7). This result would seem to indicate a growing reaction against educational innovation in the Canadian districts studied.*

*In terms of specific educational innovations, both the Canadian and American studies reveal majority support for "schools without walls" and the non-graded schools (Tables 8 and 9). The results reveal, however, that support for the non-graded school has declined in both the U.S. and Canada in the last three years.*

*In the 1976 Eraut study, public opinion was sought on the question of flexible scheduling in high schools. The insertion of this question arose out of trustee concern over the acceptability of flexible scheduling to parents. Interviewees were asked to respond to the following question: "Timetabling in secondary schools today requires students to vary the number of hours spent in school each day from term to term. Are you in favor of these flexible hours for timetabling or would you favor a standard length of school day for all terms?" The standard length of school day was favored by 63% of the interviewees with only 33% of the interviewees favoring flexible scheduling.*

5. Willingness to pay increased taxes for schools. A marked difference appears to exist between Canadian and American attitudes toward paying increased taxes for public schools. In four consecutive Gallup surveys (1969, 1970, 1971, 1972), a majority of the American public was opposed to tax increases for needed school programs. In contrast, a majority of the public in each of the three Canadian samples would approve the needed tax increase (Table 10).

6. Overall rating of the public schools. In the years 1974, 1975, and 1976 Gallup asked his sample of U.S. respondents to rate the public schools in their districts on a scale of A, B, C, D, or Fail. In Canada in 1975 and 1976, both Backer and Eraut did the same. (Table 11).

The results from the Canadian and American publics sampled are very similar. Only a small minority in both countries (less than 10%) feel that the schools are failing. On the other hand, only a slightly larger minority (about 12%) gave the schools an "A" rating. The majority of the Canadian and American respondents felt that the schools were doing an average (C rating) to better than average job (B rating).

#### Demographic Characteristics and Interviewees' Opinions

In each of the annual Gallup surveys that have been conducted to date, information has been collected from interviewees on the following characteristics: sex, race, religion, age, occupation, income, political affiliation, education level, and number of children in public or parochial schools. Gallup and his associates provide, however, only a limited analysis of interviewees' opinions on each item in terms of each of the demographic

characteristics listed above. For example, information is not provided on whether male interviewees think discipline is a bigger problem in schools than do female interviewees.

In the three Canadian studies, a detailed analysis of interviewees' characteristics and responses was done. In this paper, no attempt will be made to report the findings of this analysis. Instead, mention will be made of only one characteristic that is strongly associated with interviewee response. This characteristic is the interviewee's age. Younger interviewees have markedly different opinions on educational questions than did older interviewees. In the Macdonald, Backer and Eraut studies, the younger interviewees said: "we're opposed to corporal punishment, we need more educational innovation, don't expel the non-interested student, improve the curriculum." Older interviewees (particularly those over 50 years of age) were of a different mind and said; "strap the kids, expel the non-interested ones, make them work harder in school, cut down on the number of educational changes, let's have province-wide testing, and no more tax increases."

Other demographic characteristics such as sex, number of children in school, etc. were less consistent in predicting the nature of the interviewees' responses.

#### Concluding Statement

In recent years a considerable amount of effort has been devoted to ascertaining public attitudes toward education in both Canada and the U.S.A. These studies have been conducted primarily to assist educational policymakers in appraising the

extent of public knowledge of educational issues, ascertaining public attitudes toward present practices, determining public readiness to accept new programs and sensing public willingness to pay for educational programs. Many of the U.S. studies are well-known in Canada, e.g. the Gallup surveys, the periodic national assessments of the Educational Commission of the States,<sup>6</sup> the Ohio Department of Education's "Search for Consensus"<sup>7</sup> and the widespread use of Phi Delta Kappa's "Educational Goals and Objectives".<sup>8</sup> There are several well-known Canadian studies that examined public attitudes toward education. Among these are a number of provincial royal commissions on education (e.g. Worth Commission in Alberta<sup>9</sup>) and the CEA's Purposes of Education.<sup>10</sup> Some less well-known studies are Saskatoon's Citizens' School Inquiry", the Curriculum Inquiry Report<sup>12</sup> in Etobicoke, and the Vernon Curriculum Inquiry.<sup>13</sup>

The three B.C. studies reported on in this paper sought information that would be directly comparable to current U.S. information. In addition, the B.C. studies used the same research methodology (structured interviews) as did the American studies. The findings from the three B.C. studies may or may not be generalizable to other school districts in Canada. The studies are, however, a useful beginning in the development of a pool of knowledge concerning attitudes of the Canadian public toward education. Hopefully, this pool of knowledge will grow as other districts undertake similar interview studies in the future.

## REFERENCES

1. L. Kish, Survey Sampling, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1965), pp. 113-122 and M. Parten, Surveys, Polls and Samples: Practical Procedures, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc. 1966), pp. 266-267.
2. The publication data for the surveys are as follows:  
  
George H. Gallup, How the Nation Views the Public Schools, (Princeton, Gallup International Inc., 1969).  
  
"The Second Annual Gallup Survey of the Public Attitude Toward the Public Schools", Phi Delta Kappan, LV (October, 1970), pp. 97-112.  
  
"The Third Annual Survey of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools", Phi Delta Kappan, LIII (September, 1971), pp. 33-48.  
  
"The Fourth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education", Phi Delta Kappan, LIV (September, 1973), pp. 33-46.  
  
"The Fifth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education", Phi Delta Kappan, LV (September, 1973), pp. 38-50.  
  
"The Sixth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education", Phi Delta Kappan, 57 (December, 1975), pp. 227-240.  
  
"The Seventh Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education", Phi Delta Kappan, 57 (December, 1975), pp. 227-240.  
  
"The Eighth Annual Gallup Poll of the Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools", Phi Delta Kappan, 58 (October, 1976).
3. Donald A. Macdonald, "A Field Survey of Public Attitudes Toward Education in School District #43 Coquitlam", (unpublished research project, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., 1973).
4. Arnold A. Backer, "A Survey of Public Attitudes Toward Education in School District #37 Delta," (unpublished research project, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., 1975).
5. G. Roy Erout, "A Survey of Public Opinion on Selected Educational Issues in School District #43 Coquitlam," (unpublished research project Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. 1976).
6. National Assessment of Educational Progress, Newsletter 6, No. 9 (December, 1973), p. 3.

7. Ohio Department of Education, What 125,000 Ohioans Want from Their Schools, (Columbus:Ohio, 1973).
8. B. Keith Rose et al., Educational Planning Model, (Bloomington: Centre for the Dissemination of Innovative Programs, Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. n.d.).
9. Walter H. Worth (Commissioner), A Future of Choices, (Edmonton: Commission on Educational Planning, 1972).
10. Joseph Ladewervs, The Purposes of Education, (Toronto: Canadian Education Association, 1973).
11. E. N. Hughes (Chairman), Citizens' School Inquiry - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Public Board of Education, 1973).
12. Curriculum Inquiry Report, (Etobicoke: Board of Education, Borough of Etobicoke, 1971).
13. Norman Robinson, The Vernon Curriculum Inquiry, (Burnaby: Simon Fraser University, 1972).

T A B L E S

TABLE 1

## MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?"

| Response                         | Gallup (1973)<br>n=1627 | Macdonald (1973)<br>n=246 | Gallup (1975)<br>n=1558 | Backer (1975)<br>n=205 | Gallup (1976)<br>n=1549 | Erzant (1976)<br>n=269 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
|                                  | %                       | %                         | %                       | %                      | %                       | %                      |
| Lack of discipline               | 22                      | 17                        | 23                      | 37                     | 22                      | 43                     |
| Integration / Segregation        | 18                      | n/m <sup>b</sup>          | 15                      | n/m                    | 15                      | n/m                    |
| Lack of financial Support        | 16                      | 10                        | 14                      | 4                      | 14                      | 6                      |
| Difficulty getting good teachers | 13                      | 4                         | 11                      | m/p                    | 11                      | 7                      |
| Use of Drugs                     | 10                      | 9                         | 9                       | 9                      | 11                      | 14                     |
| Size of school / classes         | 9                       | 10                        | 10                      | 9                      | 5                       | 9                      |
| Poor curriculum                  | 7                       | 7                         | 5                       | 3                      | 14                      | 7                      |
| Lack of proper facilities        | 4                       | 3                         | 3                       | 3                      | m/p                     | 6                      |
| Parents' lack of interest        | 4                       | 7                         | m/p                     | 4                      | 5                       | 23                     |
| School board policies            | 4                       | m/p                       | m/p                     | m/p                    | 3                       | m/p                    |
| Pupils' lack of interest         | m/p <sup>a</sup>        | m/p                       | 3                       | 6                      | 3                       | 13                     |
| Poor communication               | m/p                     | m/p                       | m/p                     | 4                      | m/p                     | m/p                    |
| Crime / Vandalism                | m/p                     | m/p                       | 4                       | m/p                    | m/p                     | 6                      |

(Totals may exceed 100% because of multiple responses)

a. m/p (Minor Problem) - the problem was identified by a number of respondents but this number totalled less than 3% of all interviewees' responses.

b. n/m (No Mention) - the problem was not mentioned by any interviewee.

TABLE 2

## DEALING WITH THE NON-INTERESTED STUDENT

"Some students are not interested in school. Often they keep other students from working in schools. What should be done in these cases?"

| Response                                             | Gallup (1971)<br>n=1562 | Backer (1975)<br>n=205 | Erkut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                      | %                       | %                      | %                     |
| Special Classes for those not interested             | 29                      | 22                     | 33                    |
| Expel them                                           | 12                      | 10                     | 22                    |
| Better curricula / more interesting teaching methods | 11                      | 12                     | 19                    |
| Harsher discipline                                   | 9                       | 13                     | 13                    |
| Vocational training                                  | 8                       | 4                      | 5                     |
| Make parents more responsible                        | 7                       | 8                      | 12                    |
| Special school for problem students                  | 6                       | 2                      | n/m <sup>a</sup>      |
| Special counselling                                  | 9                       | 19                     | 28                    |
| Teachers should take more interest                   | 4                       | 2                      | n/m                   |
| Miscellaneous                                        | 5                       | 1                      | 1                     |
| Don't know / No answer                               | 18                      | 6                      | 3                     |

(Totals may exceed 100% because of multiple responses)

a. n/m (No Mention) - the problem was not mentioned by any interviewee.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

"Do you think schools should have the right to strap students who do not respond to other forms of discipline?"

| Response   | Gallup (1971)<br>n=1572 | Backer (1975)<br>n=205 | Eraut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|            | %                       | %                      | %                     |
| Yes        | 62                      | 77                     | 65                    |
| No         | 33                      | 20                     | 31                    |
| No Opinion | 5                       | 3                      | 4                     |

TABLE 4

## STUDENT EFFORT IN SCHOOLS

"In general do you think school children in the public schools here are made to work too hard in school and on homework, or not hard enough?"

| Response                    | Gallup (1975)<br>n=1558 | Eraut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | %                       | %                     |
| (a) At the elementary level |                         |                       |
| 1. Too hard                 | 5                       | 3                     |
| 2. Not hard enough          | 49                      | 41                    |
| 3. About right amount       | 28                      | 41                    |
| 4. No opinion               | 18                      | 15                    |
| (b) At the secondary level  |                         |                       |
| 1. Too hard                 | 3                       | 3                     |
| 2. Not hard enough          | 54                      | 48                    |
| 3. About right amount       | 22                      | 24                    |
| 4. No opinion               | 21                      | 25                    |

TABLE 5

## DECLINE OF STUDENT SCORES ON FORMAL WRITTEN EXAMS

"Formal written exams that have been given to students throughout the province (nation) indicate that students today do not have as high scores as they had a few years ago in many subject areas. What do you think is the reason for this?"

| Response                                                              | Gallup (1975)<br>n=1558 | Erkut (1975)<br>n=269 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                                                       | %                       | %                     |
| Students' lack of interest/motivation                                 | 29                      | 16                    |
| Lack of discipline in the home and school                             | 28                      | 21                    |
| Poor curriculum (too easy, not enough emphasis on basics)             | 22                      | 19                    |
| Inadequate teachers, uninterested teachers                            | 21                      | 9                     |
| Too many outside interests, including TV, extra-curricular activities | 8                       | 5                     |
| Tests are not reliable                                                | -                       | 5                     |
| Miscellaneous                                                         | 13                      | 7                     |
| No Opinion                                                            | 13                      | 11                    |
| Poor instructional methods                                            | -                       | 19                    |

(Totals may exceed 100% because of multiple responses)

TABLE 6

## PROVINCIAL (NATIONAL) TESTING

"Would you like to see the students in local schools be given provincial (national) tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other communities?"

| Response   | Gallup (1970)<br>n=1572 | Macdonald (1973)<br>n=246 | Backer (1975)<br>n=205 | Erkut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|            | %                       | %                         | %                      | %                     |
| Yes        | 75                      | 61                        | 73                     | 74                    |
| No         | 16                      | 32                        | 22                     | 23                    |
| No Opinion | 9                       | 7                         | 5                      | 3                     |

TABLE 7

## PACE OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

"Do you feel that the local public schools are not interested enough in trying new ways and methods or are they too ready to try new ideas?"

| Response    | Gallup<br>(1970)<br>n=1592 | Gallup<br>(1971)<br>n=1562 | Macdonald<br>(1973)<br>n=246 | Gallup<br>(1974)<br>n=1702 | Backer<br>(1975)<br>n=205 | Erkut<br>(1976)<br>n=269 |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|             | %                          | %                          | %                            | %                          | %                         | %                        |
| Too many    | 20                         | 22                         | 17                           | 20                         | 33                        | 26                       |
| Not enough  | 21                         | 24                         | 18                           | 24                         | 12                        | 10                       |
| About right | 32                         | 32                         | 41                           | 32                         | 43                        | 34                       |
| Don't know  | 27                         | 22                         | 24                           | 24                         | 12                        | 30                       |

TABLE 8

## FORMAL LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING

"In most communities students can learn many things outside the school. Would you approve or disapprove if the schools here reduced the amount of classroom instruction to allow students to make greater use of the educational opportunities outside the school?"

| Response   | Gallup (1972)<br>n=1614 | Macdonald (1973)<br>n=246 | Backer (1975)<br>n=205 | Erkut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|            | %                       | %                         | %                      | %                     |
| Approve    | 56                      | 67                        | 57                     | 60                    |
| Disapprove | 35                      | 30                        | 41                     | 35                    |
| No Opinion | 9                       | 3                         | 2                      | 5                     |

TABLE 9

## THE NON-GRADED SCHOOL

"Should a student be able to progress through the school system without regard to the usual grade levels? This would mean that he might study seventh grade Math but fifth grade English. Would you favor or oppose such a plan in the local schools?"

| Response   | Gallup (1972)<br>n=1614 | Macdonald (1973)<br>n=246 | Gallup (1975)<br>n=1558 | Erkut (1976)<br>n=269 |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
|            | %                       | %                         | %                       | %                     |
| Favor      | 71                      | 77                        | 64                      | 67                    |
| Oppose     | 22                      | 18                        | 28                      | 30                    |
| No Opinion | 7                       | 5                         | 8                       | 3                     |

TABLE 10

## INCREASED TAXES FOR SCHOOLS

"Suppose the local public schools said they needed more money. As you feel at this time, would you vote to raise taxes for this purpose or would you vote against raising taxes for this purpose?"

| Response             | Gallup<br>(1969)<br>n=1584 | Gallup<br>(1970)<br>n=1592 | Gallup<br>(1971)<br>n=1562 | Gallup<br>(1972)<br>n=1614 | Macdonald<br>(1973)<br>n=246 | Backer<br>(1975)<br>n=205 | Erkut<br>(1976)<br>n=269 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|                      | %                          | %                          | %                          | %                          | %                            | %                         | %                        |
| For Tax Increase     | 45                         | 37                         | 40                         | 36                         | 56                           | 53                        | 51                       |
| Against Tax Increase | 49                         | 56                         | 52                         | 56                         | 34                           | 36                        | 41                       |
| No Opinion           | 6                          | 7                          | 8                          | 8                          | 10                           | 11                        | 8                        |

TABLE 11

## PUBLIC'S RATING OF ITS SCHOOLS

"Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or Fail to denote the quality of the work. Suppose the public schools themselves in this community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here - A, B, C, D, or Fail?"

| Response                 | Gallup<br>(1974)<br>n=1702 | Gallup<br>(1975)<br>n=1558 | Backer<br>(1975)<br>n=205 | Gallup<br>(1976)<br>n=1549 | Erkut<br>(1976)<br>n=269 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | %                          | %                          | %                         | %                          | %                        |
| A                        | 18                         | 13                         | 11                        | 13                         | 8                        |
| B                        | 30                         | 30                         | 36                        | 29                         | 30                       |
| C                        | 21                         | 28                         | 30                        | 28                         | 31                       |
| D                        | 6                          | 9                          | 2                         | 10                         | 5                        |
| Fail                     | 5                          | 7                          | 3                         | 6                          | 2                        |
| Don't Know/<br>No Answer | 20                         | 13                         | 18                        | 14                         | 24                       |